

18.
St. Paul and St. James reconcil'd.

A
S E R M O N

PREACH'D before the

University of Cambridge,

At St. MART's Church, on

COMMENCEMENT-SUNDAY

In the Afternoon, *June 30th 1700.*

BY

OFFSPRING BLACKALL D.D.

Chaplain in Ordinary to his MAJESTY.

C A M B R I D G E,

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The following is a list of the
 names of the persons who
 have been elected to the
 office of the President of the
 University of Cambridge
 since the year 1700.
 The names are arranged in
 alphabetical order.
 The names of the persons
 who have been elected to the
 office of the Vice-Chancellor
 of the University of Cambridge
 since the year 1700.
 The names are arranged in
 alphabetical order.
 The names of the persons
 who have been elected to the
 office of the Treasurer of the
 University of Cambridge
 since the year 1700.
 The names are arranged in
 alphabetical order.

St. JAMES II. xxiv.

Te see then how that by Works a man is justify'd, and not by Faith only.

IF it was an usual thing to take two Texts to a Sermon, I wou'd subjoin to the Words which I have now read to you those in *Rom. 3. 28.* or some other Text out of some of *St. Paul's* Epistles to the same purpose, *Therefore we conclude that a Man is justify'd by Faith*, and I wou'd read them both together, as the Theme or Subject whereon I intend to discourse at this time.

For this is indeed my present Design; not to handle these Words of *St. James* by themselves, that is, as laying down a Notion of Justification, to appearance, contrary to what *St. Paul* teaches in that other Text: But to shew that *St. Paul* and *St. James*, tho' they differ in Words and Expressions, do yet really both teach the same Doctrine; That neither doth *St. Paul*, in excluding *Works* from having any thing to do in our *Justification*, mean to exclude such *Works* as *St. James* here declares to be necessary; neither on other side doth *St. James*, in asserting the Necessity of Good *Works* together with *Faith*, and as the Effects of it, mean to attribute more to them than *St. Paul* do's.

But before I proceed to shew how these two Apostles may, as I think, be fairly reconcil'd, it may not be amiss to premise this one thing, *viz.*

A 2

That

That if that Solution of this Difficulty, which I shall by and by propose, should not seem clear and satisfactory, and if we cou'd not think of any other way whereby these two Divine Writers might, to our Apprehension, be reconcil'd together, and made to speak the same thing; it wou'd nevertheless, in that case, be reasonable to stick to the Words of St. *James*, in their strict and most natural Signification, and to suppose that S. *Paul* is to be interpreted by *him*, rather than *he* by St. *Paul*; and consequently to take for granted, that the Doctrine, which we are here taught in express words by S. *James* (*viz.* that *Works* are necessary as well as *Faith*, to render us such as God will approve of and justify at the last Day) is undoubtedly true, altho' we cou'd not tell which way St. *Paul*'s words might be fairly interpreted in the same Sense. This, I say, appears reasonable upon several Accounts. As namely,

1. Because we have an express Testimony of Scripture (1 *Pet.* 3. 16.) that in St. *Paul*'s Writings *there are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest—to their own Destruction.* And 'tis probable that those Places wherein he treats concerning Justification by *Faith* only, may be reckon'd into that number. And this St. *Augustin* says expressly, *viz.* *That the chief Difficulty of all in St. Paul's Epistles, is his so much Commendation of that Faith, which he says do's justify; by which ignorant Men understanding nothing else but only an Assent of the Mind to the Truths of the Gospel (which indeed is the prime and most proper Notion of the Word) do thence infer, that a good Life is not necessary to justify and save a man.*

And

And indeed if S. *Peter* had not made this Observation concerning the Obscurity of some of St. *Paul's* Writings, 'tis nevertheless no more than what every one that reads the Bible must needs observe, viz. that the *Epistles* of St. *Paul*, especially where he handles Controversy, are the hardest to be understood (except perhaps the Prophecies that are not yet accomplish'd) of any parts of the New Testament.

And on the other side, it is no less obvious to be observ'd, that the Epistle of St. *James*, and this Chapter of it in particular, is, to Appearance, very plain and clear; and that, both in the Conclusion which it lays down, viz. *that we are justify'd by Works, and not by Faith only*, and also in the Arguments whereby this Conclusion is made good, from the 14th Verse of this Chapter to the end.

Now if the case be thus, as it plainly seems to be, nothing can be more unreasonable than to interpret this place of St. *James* by those of St. *Paul*, that is, a plain Place by an obscure one; and on the other side, nothing can be fairer than when we meet with any crabbed or difficult Place in any Author, to see whether his Meaning be not elsewhere express'd more clearly; and if it be, to conclude that the intricate Place hath the same Meaning with the plain one, altho' we know not how well to reconcile the Words and Phrases thereof to it.

And this is the Case here: For tho' St. *Paul* and St. *James* were different Writers, yet the Author of both their Epistles was the same, viz. the Holy Spirit of God, by whose Inspiration they both wrote: their Writings are consequently both of them Parts of that one everlasting Gospel, by which God will

judge the World, and they do both of them contain (only in different Expressions) the Articles of the same Covenant between God and us. It is reasonable therefore in this Case, to observe the same Method that we do in other the like Cases, *viz.* to put such a Sense and Interpretation on any difficult or ambiguous Passage that we meet any where therein, as to make it agree to and consist with those other Passages in the same Book or Writing, which seem to be more plainly express'd, and of the Meaning of which there can be less Dispute.

2. Another Reason why I think (if we could not easily reconcile St. *Paul* with St. *James*) we ought rather to embrace the Literal Sense of St. *James*, than that of St. *Paul*, and to conclude with him that Good Works are necessary to our Justification and Salvation, as well as Faith, is, because (as is observ'd by several of the Ancients) this Epistle of St. *James* (as likewise the First of St. *John*, the Second of St. *Peter*, and that of *Jude*) was written on purpose to rectifie the Mistakes that some had fallen into, thro' their Misunderstanding of some of St. *Paul's* Writings.

Now if this be so, we may reasonably conclude, that St. *James* designing this Discourse of his concerning Faith and Works as a Commentary upon, or an Explication of what St. *Paul* had written before upon the same Subject, was very careful to avoid all that Obscurity and Ambiguity of Expression, which had occasion'd the Writings of St. *Paul* to be so grossly misunderstood, and wrested to such ill purposes, as St. *Peter* observes they had been by some ignorant and perverse Men; and consequently that St. *James* uses the Words Faith and Works in that

Sense

Sense which is most natural and obvious, in that Sense wherein Common Readers were most like to understand them: whereas *St. Paul's Epistles* (I mean those wherein he handles this same Subject) being written with another Design, as I shall shew hereafter, it may well be suppos'd that he, having in his writing them an Eye to his main Design, (which was to shew the Necessity of embracing the Christian Faith, and the no Obligation that lay upon *Christians* from the Ceremonial Law of *Moses*) was more careless in his other Expressions, as not fearing that any Person instructed in the Christian Religion would ever so grossly misunderstand and pervert his Words, as to think that he intended to give Encouragement to a lewd and dissolute Life.

But this, nevertheless, some did think, at least they pleaded *St. Paul's* Authority for it, that if Men did but believe aright, it was no great matter how they liv'd. Against these therefore our Apostle *S. James* sets himself in this Chapter, and shews at large that Christianity did not consist only in a true and orthodox Faith, that a bare Belief in *Christ*, or of the Truths of the Gospel, without bringing forth Fruits in our Life and Conversation, answerable to such a Belief, would be in no wise sufficient to justify or save us.

And that in writing this, he had an Eye to what *St. Paul* had written before upon the same Subject, is further probable, because he makes use of that very Instance of *Abraham* to prove the Necessity of Good Works together with Faith, which *St. Paul* had before brought against the *Jews*, to shew the sufficiency of Faith alone without Works, that is, without those Ceremonial Observances, which they would have
press'd

press'd upon all other *Christians*, and which they laid more Stress upon, and did put more Confidence in, than in the *weightier Matters of the Law, Justice, Mercy and Fidelity.*

This *Epistle* of St. *James* therefore being written after St. *Paul's Epistles*, and, so very probably, with a Design to explain them where they had been misunderstood; it is reasonable to take for granted, that what St. *James* here plainly asserts, touching the Necessity of Good *Works* together with *Faith*, is the Sense of St. *Paul*, altho' we cou'd not easily bring St. *Paul's* Words to it. Especially if it be consider'd farther, in the 3^d Place,

3. That tho' this *Epistle* of St. *James* had been never written; nay, tho' there had not been one plain Text in the whole Bible expressly asserting the Insufficiency of a *meer Belief*, or of an empty fruitless *Faith*; yet we could not understand those Passages of St. *Paul*, wherein he so much magnifies *Faith*, and decries *Works*, in any other Sense than what St. *James* here plainly teaches, without making those Passages in St. *Paul* to evacuate all the rest of the Bible, and to contradict the whole Design of the Gospel.

For there is never a Page, hardly a Verse in the whole Bible, wherein the Nature of that Covenant which God hath made with Mankind is spoken of, which doth not either in express Words, or by plain Consequence contradict and disprove that wild Notion of being saved only by a bare Belief, tho' we take no Care to lead our Lives suitably to our Belief.

Now

Now this is the Method that we observe in the Reading of other Books, We consider the Scope and Design of the whole, and judge of the Sense of particular Passages with Reference to that: and if there be any single Passage which we apprehend not the Meaning of, or which, at the first Reading, seems to have another Meaning than is agreeable to the Author's main Design, we build nothing upon such a Passage, but wait a while to see if the Author will not elsewhere explain himself: And if he do's not, and if at last we can't discern how that Passage can, without somewhat straining the Words, be reconcil'd with others, we conclude however and take for granted, that the Author (if he appears to be a Person of Judgment) is consistent with himself, and consequently that in that Passage, however the Words of it may sound, he did not mean to thwart and contradict all the rest of his Book.

And this is the Case here, for the Design of our Saviour's coming into the World was to make Men holy, all that he did, and taught, and suffer'd, had a Tendency to effect this Design, and his whole Gospel is in a manner made up of Precepts, and Exhortations, and Encouragements to Godliness and Virtue, and of severe Threatnings against all manner of Sin. *The Wrath of God is, therein, reveal'd from Heaven, against all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men, who hold the Truth in Unrighteousness, Rom. 1. 18.* These things are plain and undeniable, this is manifestly the Scope and Design of the whole Bible: and therefore altho' some few Passages in St. Paul's Writings shou'd, in their most obvious Meaning, seem to imply the contrary to this, it wou'd be reasonable,

however, to believe and assert the indispensable Necessity of an Holy Life, together with an Orthodox Belief, rather than upon them alone to ground a Doctrine, which, if true, wou'd plainly evacuate all the rest of the Bible, & perfectly thwart and contradict the whole Design of the Gospel.

And this I think a sure Ground for them to go upon who have not leisure to study the Point, or who after all their study, are not able clearly to discern how these two *Apostles* may be fairly reconcil'd in their seemingly contradictory Assertions; one saying, that *we are justify'd by Faith*, and the other, that *we are justify'd by Works, and not by Faith only*.

Which difference nevertheless I believe it is not so hard a Matter to reconcile, as at the first Sight it may appear to be; the seeming Contrariety between them lying, as I suppose, only in their using in different Senses, the Words *Justify*, *Faith*, and *Works*: every one of which Words is capable of, and is very often in Scripture us'd in different Senses. For,

I. As to the Word *Justify*, not to trouble you with the Etymology of it, which is but an uncertain way of knowing the common Acceptation of a Word, nor yet with the Sense which Heathen Writers have us'd the Word in, from whence we cannot with certainty collect in what Sense the Sacred Writers do use it; it may be sufficient to observe, that the most obvious and usual Signification thereof in Holy Scripture, is, to receive to Mercy, to absolve and acquit from former Transgressions. When God justifies a Man, it is by forgiving him his Trespases, and accepting, esteeming and rewarding him as a righteous Person, altho' he is not really and strictly such. And thus

thus St. Paul himself seems to expound the Word, in *Rom. 3. 25.* *Being justify'd freely by his Grace, thro' the Redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation thro' Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righteousness for the Remission of Sins that are past, thro' the Forbearance of God.* In which Text, *being justify'd*, and *having our Sins remitted*, seem to be us'd as Terms of the same Signification. And the Psalmist, meaning to describe the Blessedness of a justify'd Person, thus expresses it, *Blessed are they whose Iniquities are forgiven, and whose Sins are cover'd; Blessed is the Man to whom the Lord will not impute Sin.* *Psal. 32. 1, 2.* *Rom. 4. 5, 6, 7, 8.* And indeed this is all the *Justification* that *Sinful Men* (and such all Men are) are capable of: for being in truth Sinners, they can't, by a just God, be acquitted as Innocent; they can therefore be *justify'd* no other way, but by having their Sins forgiven them, and by being receiv'd to Mercy, for if God shou'd enter into *strict Judgment with us*, no Man living cou'd be *justify'd in his sight*, as the Psalmist says, *Psal. 143. 2.*

To *justify* therefore, in the common Scriptural Notion of it, is, to *absolve* from Guilt, to *discharge* from Punishment; and accordingly it is frequently in Scripture oppos'd to *Condemnation*. It is God that justifieth, says the Apostle, (*Rom. 8. 33, 34.*) *who is he that condemneth?* And in another Place, (*Rom. 5. 9.*) *Being justify'd by his Blood, we shall be sav'd from Wrath, thro' him.*

Now taking the Word in this Sense, there is a *twofold Justification*.

B 2

First,

First, When we take upon us the Profession of the Christian Religion in *Baptism*; for then our past Sins are forgiven us, then we are receiv'd into a Covenant of Grace and Pardon.

But this is not a full *Justification*; for our Sins are not then clearly pardon'd and forgiven, because they may, after this, be still imputed to us; and so they will be, in case we afterwards do either in Profession or in Works deny that Faith, which we then take upon us. Our *Second* therefore, and our compleat and final *Justification* is not till the great Day of Judgment, when God will forever acquit from the Guilt, and free from the Punishment of all their past Sins, all those who continu'd faithful to that Covenant, which they entred into with God at their *Baptism*.

Supposing therefore at present that St. *Paul* and St. *James*, do by *Faith* and *Works*, both mean the same things: yet if they do not both speak of the same *Justification*; If St. *Paul*, when he speaks of *Justification* by *Faith*, means the *First Justification*, which is dispensed to us in *Baptism*; and St. *James*, when he affirms that *we are justify'd by Works, and not by Faith only*, means the *Second and Final Justification* at the last Day, there is plainly no manner of Contrariety between them. For it may be true, that in order to our being admitted into the Covenant of *Justification* and Pardon, nothing more may be requir'd, but only that we firmly believe and embrace the Christian Religion, (and accordingly we may observe, that as a previous Disposition to *Baptism* nothing else seems to be requir'd, but only that we shou'd believe the Gospel, and in Profession renounce our former Sins,

Sins, according to that of St. *Philip* to the *Eunuch*, Acts 8. 37. *If thou believest with all thine Heart, thou mayst be baptiz'd,*) and yet it may be true too, that our being put into a *justify'd* state by *Baptism*, will in the Event be no Advantage to us, but rather only increase our Condemnation, unless afterwards we continue true and faithful to that Profession which we then take upon us, and are careful to perform our Part of that Covenant which we then enter into with God. Now, I say, this last seems to be what St. *James* affirms, and the first all that St. *Paul* teaches, at least in many of those Places, where he says, We are *justify'd* by *Faith*.

For that by the *Justification* which St. *James* speaks of, when he says we are *justify'd* by *Works*, and not by *Faith* only, he means our *Final Justification* at the great Day, upon which that Salvation will immediately be bestow'd upon us, which at our Baptism was only promis'd and assur'd to us upon certain Conditions, is evident, by his using *Justification* and *Salvation*, in this Dispute, as Terms equivalent. For thus he expresses the Doctrine of the Text, in the 14th. Verse, where he first begins to handle the Subject, *What do's it profit, my Brethren, if a Man say he hath Faith, and have not Works? can Faith save him?* It is plain that he means the same thing there by being *save'd*, that he do's in the Text and other Verses of this Chapter, by being *justify'd*, and consequently that by *Justification*, in this Discourse of his concerning Faith and Works, he means that *Final Justification*, upon which Salvation is immediately consequent.

And on the other side, that St. *Paul* in very many at least, if not in all those Places wherein he attributes

Justi-

Justification to Faith only without Works, means thereby only our *First Justification*, that is, our being admitted into the Covenant of Grace, and being put into a *justify'd state* by *Baptism*, will, I suppose, be no less evident, if these two things be consider'd.

1. That in many Places he speaks of *Justification* as a thing *past*, which he cou'd not do if he had meant the same thing by *Justification* that St. James do's. For thus writing to the *Corinthians*, he says, *1 Cor. 6. 11. Ye are, or Ye have been justify'd in the Name of the Lord Jesus: And Rom. 6. 1.* speaking of himself and other *Christians* that were then living, and consequently not *finally justify'd* in St. James's Use of the Word, he says, *That being justify'd by Faith they had Peace with God.* And upon this he grounds their Hope that they shou'd also, if they continu'd in Faith, be *finally justify'd* by God at the last Day, ver. 9. *For if while we were Sinners Christ dy'd for us, much more then, being now justify'd by his Blood, we shall be sav'd from Wrath thro' him.*

2. It may be also further observ'd, That in many Places he expressly joins *Justification* with *Baptism*, as an Effect or Concomitant of it: as in *Tit. 3. 5, 7. Not by Works of Righteousness which we have done, but according to his Mercy he sav'd us by the washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, — that being justify'd by his Grace, we shou'd be made Heirs according to the Hope of eternal Life; and in 1 Cor. 6. 11. Such were some of you, but ye are wash'd, but ye are sanctify'd, but ye are justify'd: they were justify'd, it seems, at the same time that they were wash'd, that is, at their Baptism, when they openly and solemnly renounc'd those wicked Works which they*

they had formerly liv'd in, and took upon them the Profession of the Christian Faith.

Now therefore, if this be granted, which seems to be very probable, that St. *Paul* generally means this by *Justification*; (*viz.* only our being admitted into a State of Grace and Favor with God, at our *Baptism*, in which State if we continue by persevering in Faith and Obedience, we shall at last be *justify'd* and acquitted *finally* in the great Judgment,) it will be easy to understand all those Places wherein he attributes this to *Faith* only, in a Sense very agreeable to the Doctrine which St. *James* here teaches; it will be easy then to understand what St. *Paul* means, *Rom. 4. 5.* where he says, that God *justify'd the Ungodly*; then, I say, that Passage which hath been thought the strongest, will appear to be no Objection at all against St. *James's* Doctrine; the Meaning thereof being only this, That the Grace of God in *Christ Jesus* is so large, as that he do's not refuse even the vilest and greatest Sinners, but readily accepts them to Favour, upon their Belief of the Gospel, and closing with the Terms of it: and there will be then no difficulty at all in understanding how *Abraham* was *justify'd* by *Faith* only, according to St. *Paul*, and how he was *justify'd* by *Works*, that is, not by *Faith* only, as St. *James* expressly affirms he was, at the 21st Verse of this Chapter. For the Case was thus: Upon his giving a full and hearty Assent to the Truth of the Divine Promises, he was immediately receiv'd into God's Favor and Acceptance, even before the Sincerity of his Faith had been actually try'd by his Obedience: *Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for Righteousness, Rom. 4. 3.* so that he was *then* in a *justify'd* state: and yet, if
after

after this he had declin'd to leave his Country and his Father's House, or even to sacrifice his Son at God's Command, he wou'd by this Disobedience have fall'n from that state of Divine Favor, and not have been *finally justify'd* by God; but then all his former (as well as his later) sins, which had been once remitted to him, with a temporary and conditional Remission, upon his first entring into the Covenant of Grace, by *Faith*, (by virtue of which Remission, he was, while he continu'd in the Covenant, a *justify'd* Person) wou'd nevertheless have been imputed to him, and he condemn'd for them, if he had afterwards swerv'd from his Obedience.

In short therefore, the *Justification* which St. Paul generally speaks of, is *that* whereby we are made *Heirs* of *Salvation*, as he himself explains it, in the afore-cited Text, *Tit. 3. 7. That being justify'd by Grace we shou'd be made Heirs, according to the Hope of eternal Life*: but the *Justification* which St. James speaks of, is that by which we are actually *admitted* into the *Possession* of this Inheritance. And therefore, tho' in order to the *first Justification* nothing more be necessary but only that we close with, and accept of those Terms of Reconciliation, which God offers to us: yet in order to the *Second Justification*, it is moreover necessary that we should stand to and perform those Terms, that we shou'd make good that Covenant which we before entred into; or else, tho' we are *now* already *justify'd* in St. Paul's Sense, that is, are now already by our embracing and believing and professing the Gospel, in such a Capacity and Likelihood of obtaining eternal Life, as an *Heir* is of enjoying his Father's Estate, we shall never be *justify'd* in St. James's Sense, that is, we shall never actually possess and enjoy the Estate,
but

but notwithstanding our present Heirship, shall at last be cast off, and disinherited for our Disobedience.

And this Observation concerning the different Senses, wherein these two *Apostles* do sometimes use the Word *justify*, may, I suppose, be alone sufficient to reconcile them in most, if not in all those Passages wherein they seem to differ. But

II. The Word *Faith* or *Belief*, which they do both use in treating of this Subject, is likewise a Word capable of, and frequently in Scripture us'd in different Senses, and I believe it may easily be made appear, that in those Places wherein *St. Paul* attributes so much to *Faith*, wherein he is thought to declare that *that* is the only Condition of our final *Justification*, and Admittance into the Possession of the promis'd Inheritance, he means quite another thing by *Faith* than *St. James* do's, when he says that *that alone is not sufficient*, even all that *St. James* means by *Faith* and *Works* too.

I will not trouble you now with all the Significations, in which the Word *Faith* or *Belief* is us'd in Holy Scripture, but shall take notice only of two, which I suppose most applicable to the Case in hand.

1. The *First* Sense of it which I shall take notice of, is that which indeed is the most obvious and proper Meaning of the Word, that is, when by *Faith* is meant, *An Assent of the Mind to the Truth of some Reveal'd Proposition*. And in this sense *St. James* uses the Word: By that *Faith*, which being without *Works*, he says, is not sufficient to justify or save us, he plainly means nothing more than only a *Belief* of those Truths, which are reveal'd in the Gospel. And the Case that he puts, is this, That a Man believes there is a God, and that those things, which he has reveal'd,

are true, and that all his Promises and Threatnings shall be made good, but nevertheless takes no care to live well; and in this Case he says, that such a *Faith* as this is an *empty dead Faith*, and that it will be of no real Advantage to us, any more than it is to the Devils, who believe all these Truths as firmly as we can do, but without any Benefit to themselves, because the Promises being not made to them, they are not thereby incited to the Doing of Good.

But the Promises are made to us, and therefore it can hardly be conceiv'd, it is scarcely to be suppos'd, that any Man that firmly believes all the Truths of the Gospel, and considers his own Interest therein, shou'd nevertheless allow himself in a wicked Life. *Faith* is naturally such an active, lively and working Principle, that it can hardly fail to shew its self by its Effects:

2. And for this Reason, *Secondly*, the Word *Faith*, which most properly signifies nothing but the Cause or Principle, is oftentimes in Scripture put to signify both the Cause and the Effect too, that is, both a Belief of the Gospel Truths, and also a Life led answerable to such a Belief.

And in this large and comprehensive sense 'tis clearly evident St. *Paul* do's use the Word in divers Places, and especially in those Epistles where he treats of *Justification* by *Faith*, as may appear from his oftentimes using other Words and Phrases instead of the single Word *Faith*. For what he sometimes calls *Faith*, he, at other times in those same Epistles, calls *the Law of Faith*, and *the Obedience of Faith*; (*Rom.* 3, 27. 1, 5. 16. 16.) and in *Rom.* 10. 16. he most clearly explains his own meaning to be, to include and comprehend

prehend Obedience in the Word *Faith*, whenever he attributes so much to *Faith*: But they have not all obey'd the Gospel, for *Esaïas* saith, Lord, who hath believ'd our Report? In which Words the same thing is plainly meant by obeying the Gospel, and believing the Report of the Preachers of it; from whence it clearly appears, That the *Faith* or *Belief* which he so much magnifies in that Epistle, is not an idle ineffectual Belief, but such a *Faith* as makes Men to be obedient.

Forasmuch therefore as the *Faith* which St. Paul speaks of, when he says we are justify'd by *Faith*, includes in it all that St. James means by *Faith* and *Works* too; it is plain, That tho' we suppose that they do both use the Word *justify* always in the same sense, there is not, however, any Contrariety in their Doctrines, altho' one says that we are justify'd by *Faith*, and the other, that we are justify'd by *Works*, and not by *Faith* only. But

III. There is also an Ambiguity in the Word *Works*; and it is not improbable, (nay I suppose I shall make it very plain) that these two Apostles St. Paul and St. James, in their several Discourses upon the subject of *Justification*, do likewise use this Word in very different Senses; and that St. Paul, when he excludes *Works*, do's not mean the same by *Works* that St. James do's, when he affirms that we are justify'd by *Works*, and not by *Faith* only.

And if St. James by *Works*, when he affirms them to be necessary together with *Faith*, means those Works of Piety, Justice and Charity, and other Moral Duties which are requir'd in the Gospel; as to any one that reads the former Part of the Chapter it

will be evident that he do's, and on the other side, if *S. Paul*, when he excludes *Works*, means by *Works* only, either those *materially good Works*, which Men might do without the Grace of the Gospel, or the *Merit* of Good Works, or else those *Ritual Observances* which were requir'd by the Ceremonial Law of *Moses*: then, tho' their Words and Expressions be different, yet their sense may be the very same.

Now concerning this Place in *St. James*, I think there can be no Dispute, he plainly takes both *Faith* and *Works* in the most proper and usual acceptation of the Words: by *Faith*, when he affirms that Faith alone is not sufficient, he plainly means a *meer Belief* of the Truths of the Gospel, and by *Works*, when he affirms that they are necessary together with Faith, he plainly means such a sort of *Life and Conversation*, as the Belief of the Gospel-Truths is naturally apt to produce, a *Conversation becoming the Gospel of Christ*: and both these he affirms to be necessary, in order to our final Justification at the last Day.

And on the other side, *St. Paul*, if at any time he speaks of the same *Justification* that *St. James* do's, means, by *Faith*, when he says we are justify'd by that only, all that *St. James* means by *Faith* and *Works* too (as hath been shewn already) and by *Works*, when he says we are justify'd without Works, he means only, either the *Merit* of good Works, or *such Works* as might be done by unregenerate Men, without the Grace of the Gospel, or else the *Ritual Observances* of the Mosaical Law.

And that he uses the Words in these Senses, and do's not mean to exclude from being a Condition of our final Justification that hearty Obedience to the
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Precepts of the Gospel, which a firm Belief of the Truths of it is naturally apt to produce, will further appear, if these two things be consider'd: 1. The *Occasion* and *Design* of those Discourses of St. Paul, wherein *Faith* is so much magnify'd, and *Works* are set so light by: and 2. The several *Cautions* that are here and there intermix'd in those Discourses, as it were on purpose to prevent our mistaking his Meaning, & thinking that we may be sav'd by Faith alone, without a good Life.

1. We may consider the *Occasion* and *Design* of those Discourses of St. Paul, wherein *Faith* is so much magnify'd, and *Works* are set so light by, and which consequently do seem most to contradict the Doctrine here taught by St. James.

And I premise this first of all, That none of St. Paul's Epistles seem to have been written as if they were intended to comprehend the whole Christian Religion; they rather suppose Christianity already planted in those Places, to which his Epistles are directed. It was not consequently his Intention, in every Epistle that he wrote, to teach all the *Principles of the Doctrine of Christ*, and to lay again the *Foundation of Repentance from dead Works, and of Faith towards God*; (Heb. 6. 1.) for all this had been done before, those same Apostles, by whose Ministry they had been converted and baptiz'd, having also then (according to the Commission given them by Christ) taught them to observe all things whatsoever our Lord had commanded: (Matth. 28. 20.) As such therefore the Apostle consider'd the Persons to whom he wrote, viz. as true Disciples of Christ, as Persons that had before been taught to obey as well as to believe the Gospel; and so had no fear upon him, that

that by his using the Words *Faith* or *Works* in an uncommon sense (and yet in such a sense as the Controversy he was handling led him to use them in) they to whom he wrote wou'd ever be in danger of embracing an Opinion so contrary to the first Principles of the Christian Religion, as it plainly was, to think that they might be sav'd only by believing, without obeying the Gospel.

The main Design then, I say, of most of St. *Paul's* Epistles, I mean of the Controversial Parts of them, seems to be to furnish the *Christians* to whom he wrote, with Answers to those Objections, which the Enemies to Christianity, among whom they liv'd, did make against it. And most of the Churches to which his Epistles are directed, were made up chiefly of *Gentile-Converts*, with whom nevertheless there were some *Jewish-Converts* also intermix'd, but the far greatest Part of the *Inhabitants* of those Places were profess'd *Jews* or *Gentiles*, who, tho' both zealous, each for their own Way and against each other, yet readily join'd their forces together, as against a common Enemy, to hinder the growth and spreading of Christianity.

So that St. *Paul* had three sorts of Adversaries to deal with, viz. The *Gentiles*, the *Jews*, and the *Judaizing Christians*.

1. The *Gentiles*; who had been long bred up under the Institution of their Philosophers, and by their good and wholesom Precepts of Morality, were in a good readiness and Disposition to embrace the Gospel; which, in general, commanded little more than they were taught before by their own Philosophers, only requiring a stricter and more perfect Observance of those Rules, and adding new Motives and Encouragements to it, from the plain Revelation of a future state of rewards and punishments,

nishments, of which, before the Coming of *Christ*, Men had but an obscure Notion, and very slender Assurance.

The main Objection therefore which these had to make against *S. Paul*, was, that he took (as they thought) a great deal of pains to little purpose, in going about to establish a *new Belief*, and a *new Profession of Religion* among them, seeing that as to Practice, they had been taught all the same things in substance by their own Philosophers, so that consequently they thought, he might have spar'd his Labour. They were of the mind of our Modern *Deists*, That Natural Religion was so good and perfect, that it needed no Revelation to improve it.

Against *these* therefore the *Apostle* proves the Necessity of the *Christian Dispensation*, and of *Faith in Christ*: because tho' Men had been taught well before, they had never practis'd as they had been taught, that by reason of the Weakness of Human Nature, they had never liv'd up to what they knew was their Duty, that therefore no Man ever was or cou'd be justify'd in God's sight, by the Law of Nature, or the first Covenant made with Mankind, which requir'd strict and unfinning Obedience; that consequently it was necessary to believe in *Christ*, and to enter into that more gracious Covenant, which he by his Blood had made between God and us, whereby he had encourag'd good Works with better Promises, and offer'd to afford us divine strength and succour to assist our Endeavours: by which Covenant of Grace in *Christ* (tho' indeed we were still oblig'd to the same Duties which the Law of Nature had laid upon us) we might be justify'd, which by the other we could not be, because *that* requir'd strict and unfinning Obedience, whereas *this*
made

made Allowance for the Weakness of Humane Nature, and left room for Repentance, if at any time thro' Carelessness or Suprise we shou'd come short of our Duty. And to shew the Advantage of this Covenant made by *Christ*, and the Impossibility of being justify'd any other Way, than by having our Sins remitted to us thro' Faith in his Blood, seems to have been mainly design'd by the *Apostle* in the former Part of his *Epistle* to the *Romans*.

Now the first Covenant made with Mankind being indeed a Covenant of *Works*, without Grace, therefore in Opposition to, and to distinguish *this* from *that*, he, with good Reason, calls *this*, sometimes *Grace*, sometimes the *Law of Faith*, sometimes the *Preaching of Faith*, and sometimes barely *Faith*, which he says is the only way by which 'tis possible for us to be justify'd, because our Nature is so corrupt and degenerate, that we cannot perform perfect and unfinning Obedience. But

2. The *Jews* were also as conceited of themselves as the *Gentiles*, and as unwilling to accept of the Covenant made by *Christ*, because they trusted to be sav'd by the Observation of the Law of *Moses*.

And therefore the *Apostle* likewise, against *these*, endeavours to shew that *they* were Sinners as well as the *Gentiles*, and stood in as much need of a Saviour as they. And this he do's in the four or five first *Chapters* of his *Epistle* to the *Romans*, in some Passages of which (especially in the first and second *Chapters*) he seems to have a peculiar Respect to the *Gentiles*, and in other Places to the *Jews* more especially, and in some to both of them.

And the summ of his Argument is this, That since all, both *Jews* and *Gentiles* had sinned, and come short of the Glory of God, it was therefore necessary that a *Redeemer* shou'd

shou'd come, to make Atonement for their past Sins, and to establish a New Covenant between God and Men, which he calls *Faith*, or the *Law of Faith*, to distinguish it from the *Law of Moses*, which was truly a *Law of Works*; and by this Covenant of *Grace* or *Faith in Christ*, which was open and free for all to enter into, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, he says, might be justify'd, which they could not either of them be by the *Law of Works*, nor the *Jews* any more than the *Gentiles* by the Ceremonial *Law of Moses*, that being never design'd by God as a Condition of Justification, as having only Temporal Rewards and Punishments annex'd to it.

Seeing therefore the *Jews* as well as the *Gentiles* had broken the first Law given to Mankind, which requir'd unfinning Obedience, he says there was no means of Justification now left for either of them, but by *Faith in Christ*, that is, by coming into that new Covenant, which *Christ* had establish'd by his Death, and offer'd to us in the Gospel. But

3. Besides these two, the Apostle had also a third sort of Adversaries to deal with, which did cost him as much trouble as either of the former, and they were some who being born and bred *Jews*, had been converted to Christianity by the Preaching of the Apostles, but nevertheless still retain'd such a great Liking and Veneration for *Moses* and his *Law*, that they thought they were yet bound to observe it as much as ever, and not only so, but they would fain have forced the same upon the *Gentiles* too, telling them, that notwithstanding *Christ*, they were bound to be circumcis'd as the *Jews* were, and to keep the *Law of Moses*, and that otherwise they could not be sav'd.

Against these, therefore, the Apostle proves at large,

(especially in his Epistle to the *Galatians*) that the Law given by *Moses* was never design'd to oblige the *Gentiles*, nor the *Jews* neither longer than till the coming of *Christ*; that that Law was, to the *Jews* themselves, only a *Schoolmaster* to bring them unto *Christ*, that is, to prepare and dispose them to receive his more pure and heavenly Doctrine; that therefore now, after the Revelation and Preaching of the Gospel, that Law was of no farther Use: *After that Faith is come*, says he, that is, after the Gospel is preach'd, *we are no longer under a Schoolmaster*; *Galat. 3. 25*. That the Ceremonial Law was made up only of Types and Shadows, whereof *Christ* was the Substance, and that therefore the Substance being now come, they were to cease; that the Ceremonial Law was given only to exercise the *Jewish Nation* for some time, and was then to give Way to a better Law, the Law of *Faith* or *Evangelical Obedience*; that *Abraham* himself was justify'd by the same Means and Method which is now propounded in the Gospel, *viz.* by a lively Faith in the Promises of God working in him already Obedience to whatsoever God requir'd of him; and that he was thus justify'd before he was circumcis'd, and therefore so might they be too, without Circumcision, and such other Ritual Observances.

In the management of which Dispute with these *Judaizing Christians*, the *Apostle* calls the Christian Religion, as oppos'd to the Jewish, by the word *Faith*, to distinguish it from the Observation of *Moses's Law*, which was call'd *Works*, or the *Works* of the Law. And using the Word in this sense, he says, We are justify'd by *Faith*, and, by *Faith* only, that is, by the Faith and Obedience of the Gospel; and that there is no need at all of *Works*, that is, of such Works as were enjoyn'd by the Ceremonial

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morial Law, which they laid such great Stress upon; for thus he often explains himself, expressly calling those *Works* which he rejects, the *Works of the Law*, thereby plainly distinguishing them from *Works of Evangelical Obedience*, and clearly intimating that it was not his Intention to exclude *these*, tho' he did *those*.

Thus the *Apostle* manag'd the Controversy he was engag'd in with these *three Adversaries*: and that his main Design was to oppose One or Other of them in all those Places wherein those Passages are found, which so much magnify *Faith* and vilify *Works*, (which are especially the *Epistles* to the *Romans* and *Galatians*) will, I suppose, readily appear to any one that shall attentively read them over; and I think it will be impossible to make out the Context, or to shew how those Places do at all tend to the carrying on these Designs, if we take the Words *Faith* and *Works* in any other sense, than I have before said St. Paul do's use them in.

2. But *Secondly*, That the *Apostle* St. Paul did not intend to exclude such good *Works* as St. James here requires (*viz.* Obedience to the Precepts of the Gospel) from being necessary to our final Justification at the great Day, will yet farther and more plainly appear, if in reading over those *Epistles*, we do but observe the several *Cautions* that are here and there intermix'd, as it were on purpose to prevent our putting such an Interpretation upon his Words.

And first in the *Epistle* to the *Romans*, in Chap. 2. Ver. 6. he tells us plainly, that God will render to every Man according to his Works, Tribulation and Anguish upon every Soul of Man that doth evil, and Glory, Ho-

nour and Peace, to every Man that worketh Good, Which Passage wou'd be very oddly put in, in a Discourse wherein he was proving the Sufficiency of *Faith* alone for Justification, if thereby he had meant such a *Faith* as might be without good *Works*.

But in the 13th Verse of that Chapter, he contradicts that Opinion most expressly: *Not the Hearers of the Law, says he, shall be just before God, but the Doers of the Law shall be justify'd.* It seems then that S. Paul's Justification by *Faith* only, was not a Justification without *Works*, the *Faith*, that he there speaks of, must needs therefore be such a *Faith* as includes *Works* in it; *The Doers of the Law shall be justify'd.*

And so again, Chap. 3. Ver. 21. after he had said that both Circumcision and Uncircumcision must be justify'd by *Faith*, and that they could not be justify'd any other way, that they might not take *Faith* in such a narrow sense as to exclude good *Works*, he adds, *Do we then make void the Law thro' Faith? God forbid; Yea we establish the Law.*

And to the same purpose again, Chap. 6. Ver. 1. *What shall we say then? shall we continue in Sin that Grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to Sin live any longer therein?* And again, Ver. 15. *What then? shall we Sin, because we are not under the Law, but under Grace? God forbid.*

And lastly, (to name no more) in the 8th Chap. of that Epistle, Ver. 1. when he was come to the Conclusion of this Controversy, having shewn at large the Insufficiency of all other Ways, and the absolute necessity of accepting the Gospel-truths in order to Justification, he go's on to shew the Blessedness of those who believ'd in *Christ*, in these Words; *There is therefore*

fore now no Confirmation to them which are in Christ Jesus: but then, lest they should mistake him, and think that a bare belief in Christ, or the Profession of his Religion only was enough to entitle them to this Blessedness, he adds, *who walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit.*

The like Care he has also taken in his Epistle to the Galatians, where he handles this Controversy again, with a special respect to the Jewish Law, where we may observe, that to prevent all Misunderstanding of what he had deliver'd touching the sufficiency of Faith without Works, he takes frequent occasion to declare his Meaning to be, only to exclude the Works of the Law, not the Obedience of the Gospel.

Particularly in the two last Chapters he is very large in explaining what kind of Liberty he had been before pleading for, *Stand fast therefore*, says he, *in the Liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangl'd again with the Toke of Bondage*; Gal. 5. 1. And what Bondage he meant, appears in the next Verse, *Behold I Paul say unto you, that if you be circumcis'd, Christ shall profit you nothing*; that is, If you still trust to be sav'd by your Jewish Observances, you disclaim and renounce the Covenant which Christ hath made for you, and so can expect no Benefit from it, *Whosoever of you*, says he, *are justify'd*, that is, hope to be justify'd, *by the Law, ye are fallen from Grace. For We, thro' the Spirit, wait for the Hope of Righteousness, by Faith*; We, that is, We Christians, no less than you Jews, do wait for the Hope of Righteousness, that is, for a Reward of our Righteousness: but then it is not such a Righteousness as yours, a Righteousness consisting in the Observation of Rites and Ceremonies, but thro'
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the Spirit, that is, by a Spiritual Righteousness; and 'tis by Faith, that is, 'tis such a Righteousness as is wrought in us by Faith, that is, by our Belief of the Gospel of Christ. For, says he, Ver. 6. in Christ Jesus neither Circumcision availeth any thing, nor Uncircumcision, but Faith; not any Faith, but Faith which worketh by Love, or, Faith which is made perfect by Love. Which Words he repeats again, in Chap. 6. Ver. 14. only instead of Faith putting in another Word, not so ambiguous, In Christ Jesus, neither Circumcision availeth any thing, nor Uncircumcision, but a new Creature. And the same Apostle in another parallel Place, in another of his Epistles, puts it out of all doubt what he means in the first of these Places, by Faith, when he expresses the same by Obedience, Circumcision is nothing, and Uncircumcision is nothing, but the Keeping the Commandments of God, 1 Cor. 7. 19.

And now by all that hath been said, I suppose, it sufficiently appears, that by Faith, St. Paul means something more than only a bare Belief of the Gospel-Truths, when he makes it the sole Condition of Justification; and that by Works, he do's not mean Works of Evangelical Obedience, when he excludes them from being necessary in order to it: so that St. Paul do's not, any more than St. James, exclude such good Works as are the natural Effects of a true, lively and Christian Faith, from being necessary together with Faith, in order to our full and final Justification at the last Day.

And from all that hath been said, I think it appears, that St. Paul and St. James agree very well together, which was the Point that I propos'd to make good. St. James indeed says here, that Faith alone, or a bare Belief

Belief of the Gospel will not do without *Works* answerable to our *Faith*; *It* *sees*, *how* *that* *by* *Works* *a* *Man* *is* *justify'd*, *and* *not* *by* *Faith* *only*; St. Paul, on the other side, says, that *we* *are* *justify'd* *by* *Faith*: but tho' his manner of Expression be different from, and, in the Letter, seemingly contradictory to St. James's, his Meaning is plainly the same. He affirms indeed, that *we* *are* *justify'd* *by* *Faith*: but then, as I have shewn, he means the same thing by *Faith*, that St. James do's by *Faith* and *Works* too; he means such a *Faith* as Abraham's was (for that is his Example as well as St. James's,) he means such a *Faith* as however it is try'd, approves it self by a ready Obedience, as Abraham's did: and the *Works* which he rejects as *useless* and *unnecessary*, or as not *sufficient*, are not such as Abraham's were, the *Fruits* of a lively Faith, but either meer *ritual Observances*, or else such *Works*, as tho' materially good, are not done out of a good and virtuous Principle. In a word, he opposes *Faith*, his *justifying* and *saving Faith* not to Evangelical Obedience, but either to *unfavouring Obedience*, by which none can be justify'd, because all are Sinners, or to an *Opinion of Merit*, which there can never be any Ground for; or lastly to the *Rites* and *Ceremonies* of *Moses's Law*, which Law he shews was not then obliging, and so cou'd not be the Condition of Justification.

The Use we shou'd make of what hath been said upon this Subject, is this, We shou'd be hereby incited to the diligent Performance of that whole Condition, that (according to the Doctrine taught by both these Apostles) is requir'd of us in order to Salvation; which is, not only to believe in *Christ*, and to make Profession of the Christian Faith, but likewise to live

as becomes the Gospel of Christ, to bring forth
plenteously all the Fruits of Righteousness.
And this likewise St. Peter teaches, in his 2d Epistle,
1. 5. &c. with whose Words I shall conclude: Besides
this, giving all diligence add to your Faith Virtue, and
to Virtue Knowledge; and so Knowledge Temperance;
and to Temperance Patience; and to Patience Godli-
ness; and to Godliness Brotherly Kindness; and so Bro-
therly Kindness Charity. For if these things be in you
and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be bar-
ren nor unfruitful in the Knowledge of our Lord Jesus
Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and
cannot see far off, and hath forgotten that he was
purged from his old Sins. Wherefore the rather, Bre-
thren, give Diligence, to make your Calling and Ele-
ction sure; for if ye do these things ye shall never fall.
For so an Entrance shall be ministered unto you abun-
dantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and
Saviour Jesus Christ.

Which God, of his infinite Mercy, grant for the
Sake of the same our Lord Jesus Christ,
to whom, &c.

Which God, of his infinite Mercy, grant for the
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The Use we should have of this Subject is this: We should be hereby in-
creased to the diligent Performance of that whole Con-
dition that (according to the Doctrine taught by both
these Apostles) is required of us in order to salva-
tion, which is not only to be true, but also to be
plainly.